

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON EMPLOYEES' OUTLOOK TOWARDS THE FACTORS INFLUENCING IN ATTRITION AT BPO'S, VISAKHAPATNAM

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ABSTRACT

The growth of the BPO sector in India can be recognized mainly by the abundance of the necessary manpower. The human resource has also emerged as a cause of a major challenge for the sector, and the problem is vested in high levels of employee attrition. High attrition is reliable for the financial and performance-related setbacks faced by the Business process organizations (BPO). The high attrition rate affects the productivity of the organization. Therefore, it's very vital to curb attrition, not just for personal readiness. However, it is for the whole business too. The businesses have recognized that competitive advantage resides largely in individuals, which ignites the organizations to keep smart managers and staff could be a strategic obligation. The paper focuses on the factors chargeable for attrition and staff perception of attrition in the BPO sector. The results of the study provide key insights to the employers for enhancing their retention rate in the organizations.

KEYWORDS: Attrition, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Employees, Job Stress, Perception, Retention & Health Issues

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INTRODUCTION

Attrition is referred to as a reduction in the number of employees through retirement, resignation, or death. Attrition of staff during a restricted live is fascinating for the flow of the latest ideas in any multiplicity of the organization. This helps the organizations to keep up their gracefulness during fast-changing surroundings. It brings in new blood, discloses new views for modification, growth, and improvement, shows avenues to expand operations, and raise the artistic lines of the organizations. However, if the rate of attrition will increase on the far side at a specific level, the gains are reworked into pains. The recruiters argue that prime attrition rates considerably increase the investment created on staff (Prakash and Chowdhury, 2004). Important investments in time and cash must be created for getting staff in any organization. These will never be translated into profit once attrition is high. There's an escalating scarceness of the suitable skills gained through the education system that is brief on quality and relevance. In today's globalized world, hiring new talent has become costlier.

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) has become the plain strategic alternative of the businesses gazing at the visible profits of price reduction, whereas up to the standard of service, increasing investor price, etc. (Shah and Sharma 2007). In BPOs, the staff is experiencing issues associated with stress, sexual and racial abuse, and discontent at work (Cacanas, 2004; Rose and Wright, 2005). The human resource connected problems arising

in any respect levels became considerably atrocious and want to be addressed before long. Major hour connected problems standing as issues within the numerous levels of management embody attrition, HR policies, absenteeism, performance appraisal, and manpower allocation (Mehta et al., 2006). In organizing, the key considerations at the lower management level are associated with job style and job needs, like night shifts, monotony, and long hours. At the middle-management level, vital problems were associated with HR, organizing, and motivation. Middle-level managers have an issue retaining smart workers, motivating them to place in their best effort, and keeping them happy. Typically managers aren't trained to figure with groups, and guiding and motivating various teams at the same time is difficult (Patro, 2012). Attrition within the BPO business is twofold. One part of the attrition is where the worker leaves the industry entirely. The opposite section of attrition is where the worker joins another firm within the industry. Each section has separate reasons which require to be known. The first reason for people going to the BPO sector is because it is viewed as a spot filler occupation. There appears to be a flaw within the method the business is structured. The BPO sector predominantly depends on youth who take out time to figure, create cash within the way whereas thinking of career alternatives. Hence, for this cluster, BPO is rarely an expanded term career; however, solely a part-time job. The straightforward convenience of BPO jobs is barely a supply of easy cash until the time there's no alternative source of earning a financial gain. The unfriendly operating conditions, late-night work shifts, high tension jobs act as a restraining for individuals to stay in the BPO sector for a prolonged time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gupta (2013) Found that the staff wants manageable workloads, support, and recognition from their co-workers and management, and opportunities for growth and innovation. The study knew that about thirty percent of the workers are leaving the organization for further studies and existing hypothetical commitments at different intervals and prioritizing ways that retain new workers. And organizational culture is an important factor responsible for controlling attrition in the organization. Bharathi and Paramashivaiah (2015) study concluded that communication flows in the company are the environmental factors that need the best attention for improvement. Coaching job or mentoring by superiors, worker management, and motivation levels are the structure culture and strategy variables that need the most attention for improvement. In the results of retention efforts made by organizations (Patro, 2014). Ananthraja (2009) examined the factors responsible for employee turnover in the business process outsourcing companies. The study identified that the System-related factors like ever-changing policies of the corporate, lack of technical career advancement, lack of chance for continuous up-gradation of skills, fact that proprietary technology doesn't add worth to bio-data. Postgraduates are not given any additional benefits, delay in promotion, lack of transparency in appraisal and promotion policies, unfair appraisals, unsure future combines with limited career growth opportunity contribute towards employee attrition in the BPO sector. Dhotre (2013) has stated that the pharmaceutical trade is growing exponentially; there's a relentless thirst for the most effective and also the brightest of workers. The causes of attrition like cash issue, operating conditions, organization's culture, opportunities for growth, organization behavior, offer and demand imbalance etc. it's been terminated that structure atmosphere like work culture, engaged leaders, effective communication practices, difficult assignments, international exposure, versatile work-time, quality of life, work-life balance, etc. will increase worker engagement and improve productivity (Patro, 2016). Joshi (2004) argued that the issues such as unsatisfactory monetary rewards, lack of clarity regarding expectations from staff create them unsuccessful, and different problems like lack of clarity regarding performance-based incentives and advantages, lack of feedback regarding performance and failure on the a part of management to produce a framework at intervals that the worker perceives cause the workers to quit their jobs.

Bhaduri (2008) argues that to tackle attrition, BPO organizations have resorted to gimmicks like weekend parties, branded café in the office, gym facility, excursions, etc. Such measures prove to be of short term relevance, so if the organizations want to manage attrition in the long term, then it has to pay serious attention to the career-building of its employees. The study suggests that every manager should be adequately trained to give candid feedback and also to coach the members in his team to propel them towards learning and excelling in performance and thus facilitating their career growth, which is a potent tool to fight attrition in the long run. Thite and Russell (2010) found that employment security is not considered by the majority of the employees as a significant reason to stay in the job. The study also found that the employees who considered their employment prospects to be good and the possible ease of job substitution showed more inclination to exit. Chakravorty (2005) observed that an insufficient holiday is among the prominent causes of attrition in the BPO Industry. Organizations that cater to western clients do not observe holidays on the festivals like Diwali, Holi, Eid, etc. thereby requiring employees to work on such vital festivals, apart from these high work targets and irate customers, causes tremendous job stress which eventually leads to attrition. Budhwar et al. (2006) found that communication and counseling related to managing stress within the organizations were lacking overall and more so in smaller call centers. High turnover of employees could be attributed to their psychological situations, which were dependent on the amount of stress a typical call center agent would have to undergo. The study observed that a very less percentage of training and development time was spent on stress management sessions. Shanthi and Bhargava (2007) study found that there is a significant change in lifestyle of people working in BPOs. The young workforce (both male and female) tend to develop certain bad habits such as alcohol, smoking, etc., and also the spending patterns of such people have changed as the money is spent more on lifestyle products, and recreational activities. The study also found that the employees accepted that their financial condition has improved, but they denied that BPO employment inculcates better work ethics. Sreerekha and Kamalanabhan (2012) argued that in a call center set up, work is highly formulated and tightly controlled, and computer technology overrides management-employee relations. The study suggested that management should set up an open channel of communication in line with the daily routines to enable employees to express their feelings, ideas, and views. This can help management in obtaining information regarding employee job satisfaction. Apart from this, management can also help employees to manage their stress, especially among the front line representatives in call centers who experience high levels of stress while dealing with demanding clients.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad aim of the study is to examine the employees' outlook on Attrition in BPO's. To understand the factors related to attrition in selected BPO organizations and to identify the predominant factor causing employee attrition.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses have been formulated to test the relation between the socioeconomic factors and the dimensions of attrition.

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and employees' job satisfaction.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and employees' job stress.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and employees' health issues.
- H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and employees' work-life balance.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and unfair treatment at work.

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and policies & procedures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study uses data from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary data sources include records of the selected BPO's, annual reports of the companies, research studies on attrition, websites of the companies, etc. The primary data sources include the employees of selected BPO's on attrition. The study area for the purpose of collection of primary data is Visakhapatnam district in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Five BPO organizations based on the volume of business are selected for the study. To pursue the objectives of the study, a survey of employee's opinions on attrition has been taken up. A sample of 30 employees from each BPO company is included in the sample to know the perception of attrition. Thus, the total of employees interviewed is 30x5=150. To know the employee's perception of attrition in BPOs, the companies selected in the study are ACN INFO, Concentrix, HSBC, Patra, and WNC. By using random sample method, we have taken feedback from the employees. The questionnaire for employees' attrition in BPOs covers the following variables, namely, socio-economic profiles of the respondents, job satisfaction, job stress, health issues, work-life balance, unfair treatment, and policies & procedures. For the tabulation and analysis of data, the appropriate statistical techniques were used. To analyze the collected data, Frequencies, Mean, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Regression analysis were used. IBM SPSS software version 22.0 is used for the statistical analysis.

Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

The socioeconomic profile of the respondents related to gender, age, education, marital status, area of work, work experience in the previous organization, monthly salary is analyzed, as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Profile of the Respondents

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	63	42
Male	87	58
Total	150	100
Age		
21 - 25 Years	86	57.3
26 - 30 Years	35	23.3
31 - 35 Years	19	12.7
Above 35 years	10	6.7
Total	150	100
Education Qualification		
Graduate	82	54.7
Postgraduate	68	45.3
Total	150	100
Marital status		
Married	80	53.3
Unmarried	65	43.3
Divorced	4	2.7
Widow	1	0.7
Total	150	100
Specific area of work		
Customer Services	85	56.7
Finance & Banking	11	7.3
Technical Support	7	4.7

Medical Insu / Billing / Health Care	22	14.0
Data Entry Process	25	17.3
Total	150	100
Work Experience in your Previous Organization		
Less than 6 months	80	53.3
6 months to 1 Year	21	14
1 - 2 Years	27	18
3 - 5 Years	22	14.7
Total	150	100
Monthly Salary		
Less than Rs.10,000	11	7.3
Rs.10,001 - Rs.15,000	50	33.3
Rs.15,001 - Rs.20,000	47	31.3
Rs.20,001 - Rs.25,000	28	18.7
Above Rs.25,000	14	9.3
Total	150	100

The male respondents constitute 58 percent of the total, while female respondents' share in the total is 42 percent. The majority of the respondents representing 57.3 percent are in the age group of 21-25 years. Out of the total, 23.3 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 26-30 years, and 12.7 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 31-35 years. 6.7 percent of the age group above 35 years. The educational qualification reveals that 54.7 percent of the total respondents are graduates, and 45.3 percent are postgraduates. The marital status shows that 43.3 percent of the respondents are unmarried, whereas 53.3 percent of the respondents are married. The majority of respondents representing 56.7 percent specific area of work are customer services. Out of the total, 17.3 percent of the respondents' area of work is data entry process, whereas 14.0 percent of the respondents are working in the area of health care. There is 7.3 percent of the respondents working in the specific area of finance & banking, and 4.7 percent of the respondents working in the specific area of technical support.

The majority of respondents representing 18 percent are serving the previous organization for 1-2 years. There is 14 percent of the respondents who served the previous organization between 6 months to one year years and 18 percent who served the previous organization between 3-5 years. Of the total, 53.3 percent of the respondents served the previous organization for less than 6 months. The monthly salary of the respondents shows that 33.3 percent have a monthly salary between Rs.10, 001 - Rs.15, 000 per month, while 31.3 percent of respondents have a monthly salary between Rs.15,001 - Rs.20,000. The salary of 18.7 percent of the respondents varied between Rs.20, 001 - Rs. 25,000 and the monthly salary of 9.3 percent of the respondents are above Rs.25,000. There is only 7.3 percent of the respondents whose monthly salary is less than Rs.10, 000.

FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEES TOWARDS ATTRITION IN BPOs

The opinion of the employees on the factors influencing attrition in BPOs related to job satisfaction, job stress, health issues, work-life balance, unfair treatment, and policies & procedures are analyzed as shown in table-2.

Table 2: Respondents Opinion Towards Attrition

Sl. No.	Factor/Variables	Mean
Job Satisfaction		
1	Lack of job security	4.39
2	There is no creativity and innovation	4.12
3	There is no challenging task	3.98
4	Achievements are not recognized	3.85

5	Less career growth opportunity	3.76
Total		4.02
Job Stress		
1	Abusive language by customers	3.92
2	Frequent telephonic arguments with customers	3.86
3	Difficulty in handling the calls	3.84
4	Partiality in providing Shift duties	3.83
5	Peers are not supportive	3.71
6	Gender discrimination is very high	3.68
7	Suffering from group politics	3.36
Total		3.74
Health Issues		
1	Sleeping disorders	3.98
2	Spondylitis / Back pain	3.88
3	Weight gain/Obesity	3.79
4	Digestive System Related Problems	3.78
5	Repeated Migraines and headaches	3.65
6	Frequent hypertension (BP)	3.62
7	Repetitive Eye-strain	3.59
Total		3.76
Work-life Balance		
1	Unable to spend quality of time with my family	3.86
2	Work pressure on my personal life is very high	3.79
3	Deprived social life	3.68
4	Increased responsibilities at work lead to poor work-life.	3.65
5	Nature of my work is too long	3.60
Total		3.72
Unfair Treatment at Work		
1	Workplace bullying	3.90
2	Work is not appreciated or acknowledged	3.83
3	Unfair treatment at the workplace	3.78
4	Biased opportunities for promotion	3.56
5	Criticizing & degrading in front of other employees	3.15
Total		3.64
Policies and Procedures		
1	There is no timely promotions and recognition to the employees	3.89
2	There is no fair remuneration and allowances to the employees	3.79
3	Very poor grievance and redressal mechanism	3.75
4	Welfare schemes are very poor	3.68
5	There is no transparency in the appraisal system.	3.64
Total		3.75

The descriptive statistics with regard to employees' job satisfaction show that the total mean value is 4.02 which indicates that the respondents have a positive opinion towards job satisfaction. Among the referred seven variables 'lack of job security' secured the highest rating with a mean value of 4.39 followed by the variables such as there is no creativity and innovation (4.12), there is no challenging task (3.98), achievements are not recognized (4.85), and less career growth opportunity (4.76). The employees' opinion towards job stress reveals that the variable 'abusive language by customers' shows highest rating with mean value of 3.92 followed by frequent telephonic arguments with customers (3.86), difficulty in handling the calls (3.84), partiality in providing shift duties (3.83), peers are not supportive (3.71), gender discrimination is very high (3.68), and suffering with group politics (3.36). The respondents opinion towards the dimension health issues reveals that the variable sleeping disorders (3.98) got the highest rating followed by the variables spondylitis/ back pain

(3.88), weight gain/obesity (3.79), digestive system related problems (3.78), repeated migraines and headaches (3.65), frequent hypertension (3.62), and repetitive eye-strain (3.59).

The dimension work-life balance assessed based on the rating of the respondents' reveals that unable to spend quality of time with my family scored highest rating with a mean value of 3.86 followed by the variables work pressure on my personal life is very high (3.79), deprived social life (3.68), increased responsibilities at work leads to poor work-life (3.65), and nature of my work is too long (3.60). The respondents' opinion towards unfair treatment at work reveals that the variable Workplace bullying (3.90) got higher rating followed by the variables work is not appreciated or acknowledged (3.83), unfair treatment at workplace (3.78), biased opportunities for promotion (3.56), and criticizing & degrading in front of other employees (3.15). The dimension policies and procedures assessed based on the five variables shows that there is no timely promotions and recognition to the employees scored the highest rating with a mean value of 3.89 followed by the variables there is no fair remuneration and allowances to the employees (3.79), very poor grievance and redressal mechanism (3.75), welfare schemes are very poor (3.68), and there is no transparency in the appraisal system (3.64). It is significant to note that all the dimensions show positive ratings from the respondents.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Job Satisfaction	.073 ^a	.005	-.007	.21322
Job Stress	.076 ^a	.006	-.006	.18147
Health Issues	.082	.007	-.05	.18472
Work life Balance	.099 ^a	.010	-.002	.17903
Unfair Treatment at work	.091 ^a	.008	-.004	.25309
Policies & Procedures	.104 ^a	.011	-.001	.20484

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age, Experience, Salary

The model summary table-3 shows that the linear regression coefficients for job satisfaction (R=0.073), job stress (R=0.076), health issues (R=0.082), work-life balance (R=0.099), unfair treatment (R=0.091) and policies & procedures (R=0.104) indicates that there is a minimum correlation between the dependent variables and independent variables gender, age, experience, and salary. In terms of variability R-Square values shows that the independent variables (age, gender, education, and monthly salary) can predict less than 10 percent of the variance in the dimensions job satisfaction, job stress, health issues, work-life balance, unfair treatment at work, and policies & procedures.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Regression	.099	5	.020	.436	.023 ^b
	Residual	18.639	410	.045		
	Total	18.739	415			
Job Stress	Regression	.078	5	.016	.476	.004 ^b
	Residual	13.502	410	.033		
	Total	13.580	415			
Health Issues	Regression	.077	5	.027	.923	.046 ^b
	Residual	16.004	410	.038		
	Total	16.931	415			
Work life Balance	Regression	.129	5	.026	.803	.048 ^b
	Residual	13.141	410	.032		
	Total	13.270	415			
Unfair Treatment at work	Regression	.220	5	.044	.688	.032 ^b
	Residual	26.261	410	.064		
	Total	26.482	415			

Policies & Procedures	Regression	.187	5	.037	.892	.046 ^b
	Residual	17.204	410	.042		
	Total	17.391	415			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Health issues, Work-life Balance, Unfair Treatment, Policies & Procedures

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age, Experience, Salary

Table-4 shows the ANOVA results regarding the relationships between the attrition dimensions and socioeconomic factors of the respondents. It can be observed that dependent variables job satisfaction ($F=0.436$, $p=0.023<0.05$), job stress ($F=0.476$, $p=0.004<0.05$), health issues ($F=0.923$, $p=0.046<0.05$), work-life balance ($F=0.803$, $p=0.048<0.05$), unfair treatment at work ($F=0.688$, $p=0.032<0.05$), and policies & procedures ($F=0.892$, $p=0.046<0.05$) show significant positive relation with the independent variable gender, age, experience and salary. The most influencing factor is health issues followed by policies & procedures, work-life balance, unfair treatment at work, job stress, and job satisfaction.

Table 5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Job Satisfaction	(Constant)	3.208	.062		51.438	.000
	Gender	-.013	.022	-.064	-.576	.045
	Age	.009	.041	.011	.224	.023
	Experience	-.001	.006	-.006	-.122	.003
	Salary	.023	.016	.094	1.379	.019
Job Stress	(Constant)	2.838	.053		53.473	.000
	Gender	-.004	.019	-.023	-.208	.025
	Age	.028	.035	.040	.809	.019
	Experience	.000	.005	-.001	-.029	.027
	Salary	.018	.014	.090	1.312	.010
Health Issues	(Constant)	1.381	.035		42.721	.000
	Gender	-.004	.091	-.032	-.213	.035
	Age	.082	.053	.031	.906	.009
	Experience	.030	.045	-.020	-.018	.977*
	Salary	.081	.024	.008	1.211	.013
Work life Balance	(Constant)	3.038	.052		58.006	.000
	Gender	-.006	.019	-.038	-.348	.728*
	Age	.036	.035	.051	1.037	.030
	Experience	.001	.005	.009	.179	.038
	Salary	.023	.014	.114	1.671	.026
Unfair Treatment	(Constant)	3.105	.074		41.944	.000
	Gender	-.023	.026	-.095	-.860	.030
	Age	.051	.049	.051	1.034	.032
	Experience	-.001	.007	-.005	-.101	.020
	Salary	.022	.020	.078	1.137	.026
Policies & Procedures	(Constant)	2.972	.060		49.604	.000
	Gender	-.020	.021	-.104	-.940	.048
	Age	.042	.040	.053	1.071	.025
	Experience	-.001	.006	-.010	-.197	.044
	Salary	.024	.016	.104	1.526	.028

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Health Issues, Work-life Balance, Unfair Treatment, Policies & Procedures

* not significant at 0.05 level

The coefficient values are shown in table-5. It reveals that the independent variables gender ($t=-0.576$) and

experience ($t = -0.122$) show a significant negative influence on dependent variable job satisfaction, whereas the variable age ($t = 0.023$) and salary ($t = 1.379$) show a significant positive influence on dependent variable job satisfaction. In the case of job stress, the variables gender ($t = -0.208$) and experience ($t = -0.029$) show a significant negative impact whereas age ($t = 0.809$) and salary ($t = 1.312$) show a significant positive influence on job stress. With regard to health issues, the results show that the independent variables gender ($t = 0.213$), age ($t = 0.906$), and salary ($t = 1.211$) show significant positive influence, whereas experience ($t = 0.018$) do not a significant influence on employees health issues.

The coefficient values for the dimension work-life balance reveals that the independent variable gender ($t = -0.348$) do not show significant influence. The variables age ($t = 1.037$), experience ($t = 0.179$) and salary ($t = 1.671$) show a significant impact on the dependent variable work-life balance. The independent variables gender ($t = -0.860$) and experience ($t = -0.101$) show a significant negative influence on unfair treatment at work when compared to the variables age ($t = 1.034$), and salary ($t = 1.137$) show a significant positive influence on unfair treatment at work. In the case of policies & procedures, the variables gender ($t = -0.940$) and experience ($t = -0.197$) show a significant negative impact whereas age ($t = 1.071$) and salary ($t = 1.526$) show a significant positive impact on the dependent variable policies & growth.

Thus, the regression analysis results provide strong support for the rejection of the null hypotheses relating to the relationships between independent variables age, gender, experience and salary with the dependent variables job satisfaction, job stress, health issues, work-life balance, unfair treatment at work, and policies & procedures.

CONCLUSIONS

BPOs are one of the most booming sectors in the Indian industry. Since its inception, the industry has grown at a constant rate. India managed to secure the position of the most preferred and low-cost destination for business process outsourcing. In spite of the tremendous growth potential of the sector, the attrition rate and the manpower crisis is dampening the growth of the sector. The human resource professionals of the BPO industry are facing various challenges like the attrition rates and its implications, skill shortages, retaining the employees, etc. In order to implement successful business strategies to face these global challenges, organizations must ensure that they have the right people capable of delivering the strategy.

The study analyzed the six dimensions that influenced the employees' attrition in BPOs. The results revealed that the factors job satisfaction, job stress, health issues, work-life balance, unfair treatment at work, and policies & procedures show a significant positive influence on attrition. The socioeconomic factors also show a significant effect on the employees' attrition in the BPO sector. Therefore, companies must concentrate on these dimensions to retain the employees and enhance organizational effectiveness.

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